

# Students learning good citizenship

**United Press International**  
When educators and patriotic Americans a few years ago said "horror" and shuddered, they were reacting to a report on citizenship education in the schools. This scientific study, by the federally supported National Assessment of Educational Progress, showed many 13 and 17 year-olds are uninformed about American government. Additionally, half of the 13-year-olds and a third of the 17-year-olds have no interest in learning about their government.

The state of ignorance was judged by dumb answers to simple questions. For example, more than one-third in both age groups believe that the president can appoint members of Congress. Representatives of education, government, the home, business, labor and religion agreed that saluting the flag and pledging allegiance are not the foundations of educating for citizenship. They instead stressed combining a fundamental knowledge about government with participation in government. They concluded that

apathy, lack of knowledge, and feelings of powerlessness are roadblocks to citizenship education. Education U.S.A., a National Education Association newsletter, recently listed exemplary programs in citizenship education. For example: ✓ The Citizenship Development Program at the Mershon Center, Ohio State University, develops citizen competence by stressing decisionmaking, encouraging citizen and community participation and

directing university research to real problems in schools. A major project is citizenship decision-making in grades four to six, which emphasizes making citizenship decisions in everyday life. ✓ A new secondary curriculum from the Social Studies Development Center at Indiana University deals with comparing political experiences. It provides information and skills in analyzing and participating in citizenship through re-enacting actual political situations.

Another program ✓ Skills in Citizenship Action is an English-Social Studies Program for Secondary Schools developed at the University of Wisconsin. The program accents communication skills, moral deliberation, the political-legal process, community-based learning and student use of media. ✓ The Institute of Political-Legal Action in New Jersey motivates the students to register voters, volunteer in political campaigns, poll their communities on

candidates and issues, and serve as political interns. It is a federally supported project developed in New Jersey and used in 19 other states. ✓ Law in a Free Society is a kindergarten through twelfth grade project developed by the State Bar of California. The packaged program includes curriculum objectives, case studies, lesson plans and teacher guides. It is based on eight concepts — authority, justice, privacy, responsibility, participation, diversity, property and freedom.

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